

Lofgren Criticizes Harmful Effect of Bush's Budget on Women and Girls

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Washington, DC – Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-San Jose) offered the following statement regarding the negative impact of the President Bush's proposed FY 07 budget on women:

"As in previous years, President Bush has proposed a budget that would harm women and girls across the country.

"At a time when over two-thirds of low-income elderly people are women and 56% of Medicare beneficiaries are women, the President has proposed substantial cuts in Medicare, food stamps, and food delivery programs.

"On top of the \$22 billion cut in Medicare that was passed by this Republican-led Congress and the President in February, the Bush budget calls for \$105 billion more in cuts over the next ten years.

"The President's budget also would eliminate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program which serves 420,000 seniors and 50,000 women and children with nutritious food packages, often delivered to their homes.

"Replacing this home delivery food program with food stamps is not the solution, as most people on the program are elderly and in need of home delivered food to survive and maintain their health. Moreover, many people now on the food delivery program do not qualify for food stamps for various reasons. That does not mean they are not in need of home delivered food.

"Even if we assumed food stamps were the answer for this group of seniors, women, and children, the Bush budget could cause 300,000 Americans to lose their food stamp benefits.

"The problems with the Bush budget do not end with cuts in Medicare, food stamps, and food delivery programs. Bush also intends to cut programs that have helped women and girls succeed in education and the workforce.

"In 1973, the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) was introduced by a champion for women, the late Representative Patsy Mink. For more than 30 years, WEEA has funded hundreds of programs to expose girls to careers traditionally dominated by men, develop teaching strategies for math and science that engage girls, and to help schools comply with Title IX.

"At a time when the President is touting the need for a greater emphasis on science and math education, his budget would eliminate WEEA, along with \$664 million in Federal Perkins Loan funds, just two months after Congressional Republicans cut college aid by \$12 billion.

"This comes at a time when only 21% of master's degrees in engineering are awarded to women. The statistics are even worse for women of color. Of engineering master's degrees awarded to women, only 11% go to Asian-American women, 4% go to African-American women, and less than 4% go to Latinas. It seems that the President's 'competitiveness agenda' does not apply to women.

"Furthermore, instead of closing the wage gap, the Bush budget would increase the gap by eliminating Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations program (WANO), which provides grants to employers to help recruit, train and retrain women in non-traditional, well-paying jobs.

"Statistics show that women in WANO were 47% more likely to enter a high-paying, technical occupation than women who were not a part of the program.

"Bush would eliminate this program at a time when women still earn less than men – on average 76 cents to every dollar that a man earns. Moreover, in high-paying, high-technology jobs, women who hold Ph.D.s in computer science and engineering earn \$9,000 less than men.

"Women in the workforce faced with a wage gap and great need for child care assistance would be turned away by the Bush budget.

"Since the beginning of the Bush Administration, 250,000 children have lost their child care assistance. Bush would continue that trend by freezing funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant for the fifth year in a row. At this rate, 400,000 more children will lose their child care assistance in the next five years, creating a situation where 25% less children receive this assistance than did in 2000.

"The Bush budget would also leave behind women who end up in violent situations, cutting \$19.5 million in Violence Against Women programs and completely zeroing-out funding for new programs authorized by this Congress last year in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2005.

"From birth to old age and in their most vulnerable periods in life, the Bush budget would leave women and girls behind. I join my fellow members of the Women's Caucus today to call on Congress to reverse the harmful effects of the Bush's proposed budget on women and girls."